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ABSTRACT

The national re-emergence of Scotland is accompanied by the desire for cultural and linguistic autonomy and identity. Issues at hand include language standardization, bilingual education, the language problems of immigrants, the role of Gaelic as compared to the continuum of linguistic varieties that go from Standard English to Scots, the adoption of a distinctive linguistic symbol of national identity, and the identification and development of a distinct Scots language. Three actual or potential language standards exist: (1) Scots Gaelic, a Celtic language closely related to Irish Gaelic; (2) Standard Scottish English, differing phonologically and syntactically from the English of England; and (3) Scots (Lallans), a historic outgrowth of the English in England. The domains in which each language is used are described, as well as the developments in education and the media regarding the use of Gaelic and Scots. A comparison is made with the language situation in Norway. Most immigrants to Scotland are Pakistanis living in Glasgow, and, as non-speakers of English, are not confronted with language attitude problems like those of West Indians in England who speak English-based Creoles. Lexicography, social and geographical dialectology, language attitude studies, and language policy in education and government are all areas requiring further attention. (CLK)

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Potential Issues for Language Planning in Scotland[1]

Richard E. Wood*

A series of convergent social, economic and cultural events has led to the re-emergence of Scotland as a political entity, a rebirth symbolized by the planned opening in 1977 of a Scottish Assembly or parliament in Edinburgh, the first since 1707, and by the vigor of the Scottish National Party which, going further than a parliament, demands a fully independent Scotland. National re-emergence is accompanied by a desire for cultural and linguistic autonomy and identity.

Many issues of relevance for Scottish language planning were discussed at a recent conference held in Glasgow or are now coming under scrutiny in Scotland. These include issues of language standardization; the need for bilingual education; attention to the linguistic problems of immigrants; the relative role of Gaelic, on the one hand, and that continuum of linguistic varieties which stretches from English at one pole to Scots (Lallans) on the other; the adoption of a distinctive linguistic symbol of national identity vis-a-vis the outside world; and the identification and development of a distinct Scots (Lallans) language.

Three Language Standards

There are three actual or potential language standards in Scotland today, at varying stages of delineation. These are: (1) Gaelic (Scots Gaelic), (2) English (Standard Scottish English), and (3) Scots (Lallans).

Let us first examine Gaelic, otherwise known as Scots Gaelic to distinguish it from Irish Gaelic, a closely related Celtic language. Since Irish Gaelic is, however, legally known in the Republic of Ireland simply as Irish, the plain term *Gaelic* for the speech of the Scottish Highlands is sufficiently clear and will generally be used hereinafter.

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Gaelic is today showing signs of strength after several centuries of loss of terrain, which confined it largely to the Western Isles and certain pockets of the mainland West Highlands.

In May 1975, the whole of Great Britain was redivided into administrative regions. Indigenous Gaelic speakers are now found in three of the new regions: the Western Isles, the Highland Region, and the Central Region. This measure had a strikingly positive effect for the bulk of Gaelic-speakers, since one of the new regions, the Western Isles, now encompasses areas of up to 90% Gaelic-speaking population in a single administrative unit. The Western Isles Council (Gaelic: Comhairle nan Eilean) adopted and has promulgated a bilingual policy, thereby becoming a political base for the implementation of Gaelic in education, communications, administration and other fields. At the same time, the two other new regions containing indigenous Gaels are not under the Council and not legally bilingual.

Bilingual education (Gaelic-English) is now underway at primary, secondary and college levels. The principal implementing agency is the Bilingual Education Project of Comhairle nan Eilean. Particular attention is paid to the development of attractive, modern teaching materials and to curricular design. Gaelic education was in the past retarded by dull, archaic textbooks and at times by patronizing attitudes on the part of educators. Teaching materials are in part adapted to local varieties of Gaelic and to local socio-economic and cultural conditions. While traditional illiteracy in Gaelic remains a problem due in part to education wholly or largely in English, no

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particular need is felt for measures to increase the standardization or unity of Gaelic. A reasonably unitary, functional standard for Gaelic exists, dating back in its present form largely to the 18th century. Dr. Finley MacLeod, Primary Schools Adviser to Comhairle nan Eilean and a trained bilingual educator, reports that for Gaelic "there is no deliberate development of standardization or attempt to bring it up to the standard of translation equivalent to a world language. New terms are taken in haphazardly, with strong English bias of loan words" (personal communication).

A Gaelic College, Sabhal Mor Ostaig, has been founded at Teanga, Isle of Skye, and aims to develop a predominantly Gaelic-medium curriculum and turn Gaelic into a suitably developed language for advanced academic instruction in contemporary subjects, particularly in fields other than literature, music, theology, etc., where the lexical resources already exist.

Other than the official Comhairle nan Eilean, most bodies contributing to the development of Gaelic are private or semi-private. These include An Comunn Gaidhealach (The Highland Society), Inverness, the Club Leabhar publishing house in that city; another publishing house, Gairm in Glasgow, the active Gaelic Department at Jordanhill College of Education which is engaged in curriculum development, and the broadcasting organizations, notably the new regional Radio Highland in Inverness. Gaelic is barely present in television, and activist protests against the language policy of the British Broadcasting Corporation and Independent Broadcasting Association continue.

The Scottish National Party has a Gaelic Policy Development Committee which has now finalized an extensive discussion document from which the essence of an SNP platform on Gaelic will be distilled.

Another factor aiding Gaelic is its resurgence as a second language. In many areas of non-Gaelic Scotland, enrollment in Gaelic classes has increased as much as fivefold. An Comunn Gaidhealach, the Highland Society which is dedicated to the spread and development of Gaelic culture, notes a marked increase in participation in the

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non-native-speaker sections of its Gaelic literary competitions, chiefly among young people. This growth is in part associated with Scottish nationalism and in part with a return to ethnic heritage on the part of the grandchildren of Gaelic-speaking migrants to the central industrial belt.

The second standard language in Scotland, and the least problematical, is English. The question of "English as We Speak it in Scotland" was the theme of a recent conference. English is, of course, not a foreign language in Scotland. The development and maintenance of a Standard Scottish English is a task akin to that of maintaining, for example, Standard Canadian English in the face of pervasive influences from south of the border. The issue is, in Scotland, on the whole felt less strongly in Canada. We may note, however, that Scottish English differs from the English of England not only phonologically but in several syntactic points. Lexically, it differs not only in nouns, adjectives, etc., but even in prepositions. While not a problem, experience in Canada and elsewhere suggests that a subtly distinctive Standard Scottish English is a potential issue.

The least developed potential standard language in Scotland is Scots or *Lallans* ("Lowlands," as opposed to the Highlands which speak [Scots]Gaelic — an entirely different language, described above). Tom McArthur of the University of Edinburgh, rejecting Ferguson's term *diglossia*, sees most (non-Gaelic-speaking) Scots as operating in a bipolar linguistic situation, moving, in accordance with circumstance and interlocutor, along a continuum between two linguistic poles. These poles may briefly be identified as Scots and English, respectively. Scots or Lallans (sometimes *Broad* or *Braid Scots*) is the descendant of the northern-most regional varieties of Anglo-Saxon (Old English) with strong Scandinavian influences. There are some Celtic influences in it, but Scots must not be confused with (Scots) Gaelic — it is an old-established historic outgrowth of English in Scotland, a Germanic language.

The main issue of importance to language planning for Scots is that it has been identified and developed as a symbol of linguistic identity and as a potential standard by a comparatively small group of intellectuals, poets and nationalists in the face of widespread public indifference and failure to recognize Scots (Lallans) as a real or deserving linguistic standard.

Scots attained a high level of development and a degree of standardization in the 16th century which was perhaps superior to that of contemporary English (Aitken 1976). The decline and eclipse of Scots as a standard language began in the same century and was accelerated by the union of the crowns of Scotland and England in 1603, by the union of parliaments of 1707. The question of the relationship between Scots and English is a complex and subtle one, and the historical development of the problem equally so. To simplify greatly, Scots was once the standard, official language of an independent country but is no longer so. Though Scots Law is written in Scots (the Scottish legal system having remained independent of that of English), Scots has little or no recognition in education, the press, broadcasting, etc.

The notion of Scots as a vehicle for literature and as a potential standard language was revived in the early 20th century by a group of poets, led by the Scottish nationalist Hugh MacDiarmid (now, inter alia, Honorary President of the Scots Language Society). Their achievement in the planned re-creation of Lallans, was widely recognized in intellectual circles throughout the British Isles, but met with indifference and hostility on the part of middle-class Scots, especially urban dwellers.

From this point on a comparison with Norway — the closest country to Scotland outside the British Isles — is relevant. In the bipolar linguistic situation of non-Gaelic Scotland, Standard Scots — as the Lallans writers and others have tried to develop it — is the Scottish Nynorsk, while Standard Scottish English is the Bokmål of Scotland. As pointed out by Vikør 1975, Nynorsk is not really spôken as an everyday language by any Norwegian. Rather, it is the consciously developed planned counter-standard for speakers of a number of chiefly rural, conservative Norwegian language varieties, a literary standard which they can adopt for formal purposes. Bokmål, on the other hand, is the everyday vernacular of upper- and middle-class residents of Oslo and other cities, as well as the dominant language in publishing, broadcasting, education, trade, etc. To simplify grossly, use of Bokmål is "cultured," while use of Nynorsk is "patriotic." If the future of Nynorsk is uncertain, especially in view of its weakness in education (Vikør 1975), the status of Scots or Lallans is more so. Recently, the first major socio-linguistic study, Macaulay and Trevelyan 1973, studied the problems faced by urban dialect speakers in the Scottish industrial metropolis, Glasgow. The findings were that speakers of unprestigious urban dialects were sharply disadvantaged in education and employment, and that many disadvantaged speakers had negative attitudes toward their language variety.

If, on the other hand, Scots is recognized as a legitimate language and a vehicle of cultural identity, then attitudes will improve and equality of opportunity will be a more realistic goal in the country. The recognition of Scots must not, however, be confined to the sharply distinctive, tradition-hallowed rural varieties whose literary cultivation culminated in the internationally known work of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns. Under contemporary circumstances the speakers of intermediate, unprestigious varieties on the English/Scots continuum must — some Scots educators now contend — be given pride in their Scottish linguistic identity and shown the essentially historical continuity of their contemporary language from the standard of the past. To this end, a conference on the use of Scots in education was sponsored in Aberdeen in 1974 by

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the Association for Scottish Literary Studies. The papers in McClure 1974, constitute a statement of some language problems and offer some suggested solutions. The suggestion is made that Scots-speaking pupils — urban as well as rural — be shown their cultural heritage and the continuity of Scots linguistic development from the days of the Kingdom of Scotland (to 1603) down to the present. They should be encouraged to write in Scots themselves, as poets and essayists do. By contrastive analysis, differences between their language and that of the teacher or textbook can be examined, rather than glossed over. The suggestion is made for the production of a cheap school edition of the *Scottish National Dictionary*, to encourage Scots reading and writing in the schools.

The question of the relative roles of Scots and English may prompt in some American readers the recognition of some intriguing parallels between Black English and Scots, especially urban Scots and middle varieties on the Scots/English continuum. In the words of Glanville Price (in Stephens 1973), Scots ". . . is variously considered to be a markedly differentiated dialect of English or a separate language." A motion entertained by the Scots Language Society (1975) to make a paper in Scots obligatory in the Scottish Certificate of Education exam is similar in spirit to calls made in the U.S. for the administration of a test in Black English to white teachers and students, as a means of redressing past discrimination and ensuring knowledge of Black English on the part of white teachers who will confront BE speakers in the classroom.

While a historic standard for Scots is found in any Scottish lawbook, such standardization as occurs for Scots today is an unofficial, private initiative. Such efforts center in the Scots Language Society, founded in 1970-71, and its journal, *Lallans*. The editors of *Lallans* encourage the diversity of the regional forms of Scots and impose no rigid phonological, morphological or syntactic standards. Most of the members of the Scots Language Society are opposed to standardization in the form of an official orthography. Yet there is a distinct unity to the spelling norms adopted by *Lallans*. This flows from its *Scots Style Sheet* (1974). Moreover, there is a tradition of Scots spelling which, though not widely cultivated or practiced, was found by the workers of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland to enjoy a broad general consensus.

In October 1976 the Scots Language Society met with the Controller of the BBC for Scotland and made a plea for the formation of a Scots Department with responsibility for producing programs in Scots. The BBC radio program "Scottish Magazine," produced by David Campbell, has some Scots-language content. David Angus, Secretary of the Scots Language Society, calls for the establishment of Department of Scots in all universities, and for the teaching of Scots on a par with English in the schools. School teachers in all subjects should be able to use Scots as a medium at will.

Language Problems of Immigrants

The problems of immigrants to Scotland in adapting to its linguistic standards, particularly in education, have been studied in an important report of Jordanhill College of Education *(Dickinson, etal. 1976)*. The study notes that most immigrants today are Pakistanis, and hence mostly originally non-speakers of English. They are concentrated in Glasgow. It is possible that a certain proportion of immigrants is living in social and linguistic isolation and working in conditions of labor exploitation.

Despite the lack of teachers knowing Urdu, Punjabi and other Pakistani languages in the Glasgow school system, immigrants are not faced with sharply prejudiced linguistic attitudes and the problem of linguistic transition from the subcontinental languages to Glasgow English is at least a clearly defined one. There are few West Indian speakers of English-affiliated creoles — found in much greater numbers in England — with associated, frequently more severe and longer-lasting, problems of attitude and social dialect.

Linguistic Symbol of National Identity

Debate has recently been initiated, chiefly in the Edinburgh press, on the need for, and selection of, a linguistic symbol of distinctive Scottish identity. This quest appears to be prompted by the continued attraction of the dominant 19th century topos of the linguistically-based nation state, and by a recognition of the symbolic function which Irish as the official language of that Republic continues to fulfill, despite the sad facts of actual linguistic usage. A recent sequence of correspondence on this topic is found in the letter columns of *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh) in October 1976, considers what the official roles of Gaelic and Scots should be.

As Scotland enters the age of conscious language planning, the issues explored will be of broad relevance to the general concerns of language-planning and sociolinguistic theory. Issues will include the identification of *language* and *dialect*, good instances of *Ausbausprache* vs. *Abstandsprache*, the establishment of *standard* and *counter-standard*, questions of *code-switching*, of *bipolarity* and the possible application of rejection in Scottish situations of Ferguson's term *diglossia*. Work will also proceed in lexicography, social and geographical dialectology (preferably integrating the two approaches), language attitude study, language policy in education and in government.

As Scotland regains its own distinct political and cultural institutions, it is likely that the issues identified in this paper will increasingly become the concern of public, official agencies rather than the largely private, self-constituted bodies which were described above. Language planning in Scotland — some of whose potential directions of development have been suggested above — will then become a reality.

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